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POPULAR OPINION IN ENGLAND ON THE WAR.

It is well known that the people of England forced their rulers into this war in the three-fold hope of preserving the integrity and independence of Turkey, of crippling or curbing the power of Russia as dangerous to Europe, and of opening the way for free, popular governments in such countries as Poland, Hungary and Italy. This last object was the one most fondly cherished by the masses; but it was soon abandoned, if ever seriously entertained by their rulers, as utterly hopeless, or likely to recoil on themselves. Public opinion in England still insists on prosecuting the war to what is called an "honorable peace;" but there are obvious and unquestionable indications of a change now in favor of a peace on such terms as might have been obtained at the Vienna Conference, and perhaps may still be secured by wise and persistent efforts for the purpose.

On this question there have lately been in the British Parliament several earnest, protracted debates that called forth a very large amount of talent, character and political influence in favor of peace on conditions supposed to be feasible. Such men as Sir James Graham, Sidney Herbert, Gladstone, and D'Israeli, to say nothing of such as Cobden, Gibson and Bright, spoke with great eloquence and power against continuing the war. We did not suppose that the peace party had half so much strength of either character or members. The preponderance of ability, as well as of argument, was clearly on their side; and, if "coming events cast their shadows before," it cannot be very long ere the tide of popular feeling in England will set permanently in favor of peace.

On this last point we quote briefly from a very recent speech of Mr. Laing, who is careful, while pleading for peace, "to express his *entire* dissent from the principles of what are known as the peace party:"

"Firmly connected with industrial undertakings, I am able to ascertain the opinions not so much of professed politicians as of merchants, bankers, financiers and manufacturers, the independent public opinion of Europe to a great extent on this subject. At first the public opinion of this class of persons was, with few exceptions, in favor of the course adopted by the Western Powers in resisting the aggressions of Russia; but I believe their opinion is now opposed to the course taken in not making peace on the terms suggested at Vienna. I believe that this war was just, necessary and inevitable, and that peace ought not to be made until the national objects of the war are attained; but I believe that these objects have been attained, and that in now prosecuting the war further, we have committed not only a mistake but a crime. The objects of the war are very simple, and cannot be better described than they were in the circular despatch of Count Buol, the Austrian Minister, who said, 'The object of the war is to limit the political power of Russia to such a point as to render the abuse of its material resources, if not impossible, at least in the highest degree difficult.' I believe, in other words, that the general object of the war is to maintain the general balance of power in Europe; an object not only worthy of this country, but one which we cannot give up without dishonor.

In the proper sense of the term, there is no more legitimate or necessary object than the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. I believe our modern civilization rests on the fact, that we have a community of nations,

each pursuing its own development independent of the others, without allowing any one to gain undue preponderance, or to draw others into their own system. If that system were subverted, we should fall into a state of society more like that which prevailed under the Roman empire, than anything which exists in modern Europe. I think it quite clear, that Russia *had* acquired a position in Europe which did threaten the balance of power.

I believe, then, that an alliance between England and Austria to resist Russia was one dictated by nature and common sense. We brought the war upon us by alienating the German powers; and the keystone of any effectual system for resisting the aggressions of Russia, and restoring the European equilibrium, must be a hearty and cordial alliance between England and the German States. But the more immediate and specific danger arose from the position of Russia with regard to Turkey. It was caused, in the first place, by the internal and, I am afraid, incurable weakness of Turkey, and the existence of certain old treaties so ambiguous and ill-defined, that Russia could carry her aggressions on to a considerable extent without constituting any specific *casus belli* on which the other powers of Europe could interfere. The remedy proposed for that state of things by the first statesmen of Europe was embodied in the propositions termed the four points, which, in my opinion, contained a fair and rational definition of what might be reasonably asked from Russia, both as security for the future, and as punishment for the past. Russia at first refused to consider the four points; but hardly a year elapsed before she was obliged to concede their principle. A conference was then opened at Vienna; and when three and a half out of the four points had been settled, the negotiations were broken off upon the mode provided for carrying into effect the second half of the third point. Two propositions were made by Russia—the first for the absolute opening, and the second for the absolute closing, of the Black Sea; but both were rejected at once by the allied powers, as failing to afford a satisfactory guarantee. At the last moment Austria proposed the plan of counterpoise, relaxing the rule for the closing of the Straits in favor of the allies under certain contingencies; and, in addition, she agrees to enter into a triple alliance with England and France for the specific purpose of guaranteeing Turkey against any aggression on the part of Russia. I believe that a better security for the peace of Europe cannot be obtained; for so long as there is a triple alliance between England, France and Austria, the general peace will not be disturbed. * * *

Have those who reject the terms of peace, fully considered the enormous risks to which England, and all the other powers of Europe, are exposed by the continuation of the war? The resources of France and England are doubtless greater than Russia; and, if we would only submit long enough to the *desagremens* of war, we should carry our point. The expense incurred by the war, however, is a plain and tangible sacrifice which every one will appreciate. If the war is indefinitely continued for an indefinite object, we shall undo all the good that the last many years have done, and we shall load ourselves with the burden of a second national debt to no purpose. It must also be obvious to every one, that the continuance of the war must end in the exhaustion of the ally we undertook to succor. But is there no danger, also, to our alliance with France to be apprehended from a prolonged contest? Are there not to be seen in the war very obvious germs of dissidence between the two Western Powers?

Mr. Gladstone, who made the most effective speech, and incidentally said ‘the war is costing the Allies at the rate of \$500,000,000 a year, and 1000 men a day,’ took similar positions:—

“In my opinion, having attained the grand and essential points—first, the abolition of Russian rights in the principalities; and, secondly, the annulment

of Russian claims as respected the Greek Christians — the best peace for us to make is, not that which, written on a sheet of paper, may look best, but the peace which will secure the united support of Europe. Great as is the power of England and France, I defy them for any length of time so to turn the course of nature and events as, by the efforts of the two Western Powers, to control the future destinies of Russia. You may, by gigantic efforts, succeed for a moment perhaps in doing so; — though that I doubt; but it would be the success only of a moment. It is impossible to contemplate the present union and identification of the West as a permanent state of things, or to overcome the difficulties opposed by geographical distance. There is but one way of maintaining the international police of Europe, and keeping within bounds an aggressive power, and that is *by the moral union and effective concord of Europe with respect to the proceedings of that power.*

Then, is there any one who can doubt the tendencies of France in reference to this war? I believe the French people appreciate its character, and are ready to make sacrifices for the attainment of its objects; but nothing can be more absurd than to connect the freedom and avidity with which the sums required by the French government have been subscribed, with any great enthusiasm in favor of the war amongst the population. The French government offered a rate of interest so high, and terms of subscription so favorable and attractive, as to compete preferably with every other investment; and so long as the terms are equally favorable, there will be no bounds to their power of borrowing. But look at the other side — the position of the debtor. In sixteen short months of war, France has added to her public debt the sum of \$500,000,000. She offers to the creditor a rate of interest nearly equal to 5 per cent., and an immense bonus, which on the return of peace he can obtain, in the improvement of the capital value of his stock. It is perfectly obvious that for objects of remote and general policy such efforts will not continue. I think it not hazardous to predict, that the French people are not likely to go on adding \$500,000,000 to their public debt every sixteen months for the sake of the difference between counterpoise and limitation. If you want to be intelligible to France, you must hold the language which associates itself with the former glories and military traditions of the country. Depend upon it, there is danger in that quarter; and those who are as wise as all are sincere and earnest in their efforts to promote the French alliance, will be of opinion that it would have been best promoted by the acceptance of the proposals."

POINTS WHERE RUSSIA SUFFERS MOST FROM THE WAR—A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, a resident in Russia for ten years, and apparently quite free from prejudice, states some facts not less interesting than important. We quote only an outline of the article:

It appears that in Russia the great sufferers by the war are the landed proprietors, while the merchants, singularly enough, are indifferent to its continuance, or desirous of its vigorous prosecution. The manorial lords suffer in three ways. First, on account of the occupation of the Black Sea by the allied fleets, and the consequent large decrease in the demand for their linseed, flax, corn and tallow for exportation, which is estimated to have cost them one-third of their income during the past year, although they have saved themselves from absolute ruin by the transportation of their wool overland to Germany. The late expedition to the Azoff, it appears, inflicted less loss upon the Russian Government than upon individuals; for of the immense quantities of corn destroyed there, not more than one-fifth was intended for the troops, the remainder being private property.